

OUTSIDER ART CLBS220/SOC5288 FALL 2004

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Wed. 6:00-7:50pm Office Hours: Tue-Wed. 4-6pm GF Rm. 345

Course Description

It is a cliché of current cultural criticism that traditional boundaries -- between high and low art; art and politics; art and life itself -- have become hopelessly blurred. This is manifest in the difficulties that arise among art historians, aestheticians, social scientists and policy makers when they try to delineate what is art, what it should include or exclude, whether and how it should be evaluated, what importance to assign to art, and whether or not to support the artistic community with public funds.

In this class we seek to understand these changes in the meaning of art in two ways: we survey recent sociological theories of art, reading texts by Becker, Bourdieu, Geertz, among others; we consider how these theories illuminate a concrete empirical phenomenon, "outsider art" -- that is, works created by "pure" amateurs (be they folk artists, madmen, hobbyists or homeless people), putatively unsullied by academic or commercial pressures. Our larger goal is to explore myths and realities of the socially marginal and the aesthetically pure by analyzing the role each myth plays in the ongoing transvaluation of contemporary culture.

Course Requirements:

Read the required texts and photocopied selections, and as many of the recommended readings as possible. Everyone is expected to attend class and participate in discussion except in case of illness or emergency.

Two papers are required, one by early October and the other at the end of the semester. These papers are to have references clearly indicated either with foot/endnotes or with parenthetical page references. If you need help on how to cite sources, please see me.

The first paper will be a general or theoretical analysis of the subject of marginality, authenticity, and boundaries in the arts using required and recommended readings or additional works, as needed. It should prepare the way to the second paper, which will be a case study of either a current form of expression by an outsider to the art world, or a historical example. You may want to use the first paper as an introduction to the second. Please arrange to see me well before you undertake the second paper so that we can discuss it early enough to help.

Required Readings

Principal texts are on order at Barnes & Nobles on 5th Ave. and may be found at other bookstores. Most of the books and a set of articles are on reserve in Fogelman Library:

Gary Alan Fine. Everyday Genius: Self-Taught Art and the Culture of Authenticity (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004)

Michael D. Hall & Eugene W. Metcalf, Jr. eds. 1994, The Artist Outsider: Creativity & the Boundaries of Culture Smithsonian Institution Press (paper)

Vera L. Zolberg & Joni M. Cherbo, eds. 1997, Outsider Art: Contesting Boundaries in Contemporary Culture (Cambridge Univ. Press) (paper)

Course Outline

I: Preliminaries - Introduction, Syllabus, etc.

Wed. Sep. 8

Zolberg & Cherbo. Outsider Art Introduction (1-10)

Ferdinand Tönnies, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Community and Society)
(reserve packet)

No Class Meeting Sept. 15

II: The problem of authenticity in modern society

Wed. Sep. 22

Howard Becker. Art Worlds Ch. 8 "Integrated Professionals, Mavericks, Folk Artists, and Naive Artists"

Recommended

Howard S. Becker. Art Worlds

Zolberg and Cherbo. Outsider Art

III. Classic Outsiders - the "insane "

Wed. Sept. 22 and Wed. Sept. 29

Anne E. Bowler, "Asylum Art: The Social Construction of an Aesthetic Category," in Zolberg & Cherbo

Sander Gilman, "Constructing Creativity and Madness" in M. Tuchman & C.S. Eliel, Parallel Visions: Modern Artists and Outsider Art (book on reserve)

Hal Foster "No Man's Land': On the Modernist Reception of the Art of the Insane" in Drawing Papers: The Prinzhorn Collection

David MacLagan, "Bounded in a Nutshell: Reflections on the Work of Martin Ramirez" pp.114-124 in Hall & Metcalf

Recommended:

The Drawing Center's Drawing Papers: The Prinzhorn Collection. (Catalog) NYC: 1999

Roger Cardinal, Outside Art NY: Praeger, 1972

Simon Carr et al.eds., Portraits from the Outside, Exhibition Catalog. Parsons School of Design, 1990

Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Parallel Vision: Modern Artists & Outsider Art Princeton Univ. Press, 1992

John M. MacGregor. The Discovery of the Art of the Insane

Hans Prinzhorn, Artistry of the Mentally Ill NY: Springer-Verlag, 1972

Michel Thévoz, "An Anti-Museum: The Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne" pp. 62-75 in Hall & Metcalf

IV: Classic Outsiders - naïve artists

Wed. Oct. 6

Steven C. Dubin. "Naïve Artists and Savvy Supporters" in Zolberg & Cherbo

Howard S. Becker. Art Worlds Chapter 8

J.S. Ardery. "'Loser wins': Outsider art and the salvaging of disinterestedness"
(reserve packet)

Gary Alan Fine, Introduction and Ch. 1, Creating Boundaries

Recommended:

Pierre Bourdieu. The Rules of Art

V: Classic Outsiders – naïfs and visionaries?

Wed. Oct. 13

G.A. Fine. Ch. 2 Creating Biography and Ch. 2. Creating Artists

Gerald L. Davis, "Elijah Pierce, Woodcarver: Doves and Pain in Life Fulfilled"
pp.290-311 in Hall & Metcalf

Laurent Danchin, "The Merry-Go-Round of Pierre Avezard: A Masterpiece of
French Outsider Art" pp.96-113 in Hall & Metcalf

Lucy R. Lippard, "Crossing into Uncommon Grounds" pp. 2-19 in Hall & Metcalf

No class meeting Oct. 20– I will be in Sao Paulo

VI: Classic Outsiders - the "primitive" - conceptualizing art

Wed. Oct. 27 ****First paper is due****

Vera L. Zolberg. "African legacies, American realities: art and artists on the edge"
in Zolberg & Cherbo

Clifford Geertz. "Art as a Cultural System" in Local Knowledge (reserve packet)
Slide Presentation

Recommended:

James Clifford. The Predicament of Culture

Robert Goldwater. Primitivism in Modern Art

Sally Price. Primitive Art in Civilized Places

W. Rubin. 'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern

M. Torgovnick. Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives

VII: Classic Outsiders - the "primitive," and Identity

Wed. Nov. 3

Eugene W. Metcalf, Jr. "From Domination to Desire: Insiders and Outsider Art" in
Hall & Metcalf

Susan Vogel, "Always True to the Object, in Our Fashion" pp. 191-204 in
Exhibiting Cultures (reserve packet)

VIII: Institutions and Outsider Career Strategies

Wed. Nov. 10

Joanne Cubbs, "Rebels, Mystics, and Outcasts: The Romantic Artist as Outsider"
pp.76-95 in Hall & Metcalf

Henry Finney, "Art Production and Artistic Careers: The Transition from 'Outside' to 'Inside'" in Zolberg & Cherbo
Pierre Bourdieu, "But who created the creators?" (reserve packet)
G. A. Fine. Ch. 4. Creating Collections

Recommended:

Albert Boime The Academy and French Painting in the 19th Century
Harrison and Cynthia White. Canvases and Careers
Joni Maya Cherbo, "Pop Art: Ugly Duckling to Swan" in Zolberg & Cherbo
Diana Crane, The Transformation of the Avant-Garde
Laura de Coppet & Alan Jones, The Art Dealers
András Szanto, "Playing with Fire: Institutionalizing the Artist At Kostabi World" in Zolberg & Cherbo

IX The Question of Gender

Wed. Nov. 17

Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists" in Thomas Hess, Art and Sexual Politics (reserve packet)
Maureen P. Sherlock, "Mistaken Identities: Meret Oppenheim" pp.276-289 in Hall & Metcalf

Kenneth L. Ames, "Outside Outsider Art" pp.253-275 in Hall & Metcalf
Janet Wolff, "Women's Knowledge and Women's Art" in Feminine Sentences (reserve book)

Recommended:

Germaine Greer, The Obstacle Race

Thanksgiving Holiday – no class meeting Nov. 24

X: The Question of Gender, continued

Wed. Dec. 1

Leila Sussman, "Colleges and Companies: Early Modern Dance in the United States" in Zolberg & Cherbo

Irit Rogoff, "In the Empire of the Object: The Geographies of Ana Mendieta" in Zolberg & Cherbo

Recommended:

Gladys Engel and Kurt Lang. Etched in Memory

XI: Problematics of Reception

Wed. Dec. 8

Nathalie Heinich, "Outside Art and Insider Artists: Gauging Public Reactions to Contemporary Public Art" in Zolberg & Cherbo

Sander Gilman. "The Mad as Artists" in Drawing Papers: The Prinzhorn Collection: Traces Upon the Wunderblock

Video

Recommended

Stefanie Barron, "Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany
LA County Museum

XII: **Last Class Meeting** - Summing up: the future of outsider art and new genres

Wed. Dec. 20

Andreas Huyssen, "Mapping the Postmodern" pp.179-221 in After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism (reserve book)

Janet Wolff, "Postmodern Theory and Feminist Art Practice" in Feminine Sentences

Final Paper is Due

Include your address so that I can mail your paper to you, with comments.